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**Procedural**  
**Requirements**

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## **Position Management and Classification**

**Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management**

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# Preface

## P.1. Purpose

This NPR implements NASA policy, procedures, and guidelines; assigns responsibilities and defines coverage, exclusions, and terms for position management and classification, to include the NASA occupational structure, definitions of the subgroups comprising the NASA Supplemental Classification System (NSCS) position documentation and titling practices, classification appeals, and job grading appeals. It provides Agency direction to be used in conjunction with the referenced statutory and regulatory requirements. Center Human Resources Offices should be consulted for further information and guidance.

## P.2. Applicability

This NPR is applicable to NASA Headquarters and all NASA Centers, including the Office of the Inspector General and Component Facilities. Unless otherwise indicated, use of the word Center(s) in the text of the NPR includes NASA Headquarters, and any reference to Center Director(s) includes the Assistant Administrator for Institutions and Management and the Executive Director, NASA Shared Services Center. The Office of the Inspector General has statutory independence and may establish position management and classification policy that more effectively meets its mission requirements.

## P.3. Authority

- a. 5 U.S.C. S 5101 et seq., Classification
- b. 5 U.S.C. S 5301 et seq., Pay Rates and Systems
- c. 5 U.S.C. S 7101 et seq., Labor-Management Relations

## P.4. References

- a. NPD 3000.1B, Management of Human Resources
- b. OPM Handbook of Occupational Groups and Families, August 2002
- c. OPM Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, TS-134 July 1995, and TS-107 August 1991
- d. OPM Introduction to the Federal Wage System Job Grading System TS-44 September 1981, TS-13 September 1970, TS-1 September 1968
- e. OPM The Classifier's Handbook, TS-107 August 1991

- f. OPM Position Classification Appeals MSO-98-3, Employee Fact Sheet, dated June 1998
- g. NPR 3300.1A, Appointment of Personnel To/From NASA
- h. NASA Desk guide on the NASA Supplemental Classification System, dated December 2001
- i. OPM Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers, Change in Classification Implementation Policy, January 20, 2006.
- j. 5 CFR, Part 511 Classification Under the General Schedule
- k. 5 CFR, Part 532 Prevailing Rate Systems
- l. NPR 3351.1A, Reduction in Force

## **P.5. Cancellation**

NPR 3510.5B dated May 7, 1999.

/S/

Charles H. Scales  
Associate Administrator for  
Institutions and Management

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# Chapter 1. Responsibility

## 1.1 Administrator

The Administrator retains the authority to classify positions above grade General Schedule (GS) 15.

## 1.2 Center Directors

Each Center Director is responsible for:

1.2.1. Developing and implementing a sound position management and classification program consistent with applicable law and regulations and conditions or limitations imposed by the Administrator or designee.

1.2.2. Ensuring position management is utilized as a tool in planning, budgeting, and review activities for development of sound organizational structures and proper inter-relationships of positions so that organizational missions are accomplished in an effective and efficient manner.

1.2.3. Ensuring organizational structures provide for the efficient distribution of staff resources, proper design of jobs and work methods, and appropriate spans of control with clear position-to-position relationships and lines of authority.

1.2.4. Exercising position classification authority and re-delegating it to the lowest practical level; delegation to other than qualified Human Resources officials must be approved by the Director of the Workforce Management and Development Division of the Office of Human Capital Management.

## 1.3 Director, Workforce Management and Development Division

The Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, is delegated the following authorities:

1.3.1. Monitor actions taken as a result of OPM decisions. Review proposals, comments, and recommendations submitted in connection with NASA or OPM-generated actions.

1.3.2. Review and approve human resources information system and/or automated system materials for conducting classification processes and actions and/or for developing organizational structures.

1.3.3. Review and/or reclassify Federal Wage System (FWS) and GS positions at grades 15 and below. This authority may be redelegated.

1.3.4. Review and determine the final Agency decision on classification and job-grading appeals submitted by employees in FWS and GS positions at grades 15 and below.

1.3.5. Conduct occupational studies and define the basic code structure of NASA occupational

specializations, i.e., NSCS, and the requirements for NASA's single agency qualification standards for AST positions.

1.3.6. Review the position management and classification programs of each Center, conduct onsite program reviews and evaluations, and recommend or direct changes as appropriate after consultation with the Center Director.

1.3.7. Recommend to the Administrator, after consultation with the Center Director, revocation or restoration of all or part of the delegation of authority to a Center, should this action be deemed necessary.

1.3.8. Recommend classification of positions above grade GS-15 to the Administrator or designee.

1.3.9. Classify Center Human Resources Director positions at grade GS-15 or below.

1.3.10. Review and approve Center requests to delegate classification authority to other than qualified human resources specialists.

## **1.4 Assistant Administrator for Human Capital Management**

The Assistant Administrator for Human Capital Management is delegated the authority to make decisions on job grading appeals from FWS employees when no decision has been made within 60 days after the employee's application is filed, if so requested by the employee.

## **1.5 Senior Management Officials and Supervisors**

All Senior Management Officials and Supervisors have a continuing responsibility for the following:

1.5.1. Determining the need for positions and organizing work in an efficient, effective manner to include estimating future work requirements so that employees have opportunities to utilize their skills and training and can develop along career lines.

1.5.2. Clearly establishing and delineating functional and supervisory responsibilities to ensure no overlap of responsibilities or conflict of duties among positions.

1.5.3. Appropriately assigning duties and responsibilities and ensuring that position descriptions are prepared and maintained in a current and accurate state, to include certifying as to the accuracy of the position description.

1.5.4. Adding, removing, or changing assignments at any time but ensuring that major changes in duties and responsibilities are documented and assessed for effect on pay, FLSA determination, risk designation, position sensitivity, etc., and any necessary corrective action is initiated promptly when warranted.

1.5.5. Informing employees concerning their assigned duties and responsibilities and ensuring that employees have access to their position descriptions.

## **1.6 Center Human Resources Directors**

Center Human Resources Directors must ensure the provision of staff support, guidance for management, and a capability for providing position management and classification advice and service. The following operations are necessary:

1.6.1. Periodic position classification surveys of all positions (normally every 3 years).

1.6.2. An internal system for adjudication of position classification appeals.

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# Chapter 2. NASA Supplemental Classification System (NSCS)

## 2.1 NASA Supplemental Classification System (NSCS)

2.1.1. NASA developed and implemented NSCS to distinguish aspects of NASA work situations to a greater degree than the more broadly defined categories of work and occupations defined within the Governmentwide position classification scheme.

2.1.2. NSCS is divided into 10 occupational groups based on the nature of work performed and knowledge required. The schematic and definitions are established and maintained by the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, or designee.

2.1.3. The 700 Group covers professional scientific and engineering positions that accomplish and direct the NASA mission. The acronym "AST" for Aerospace Technology is used to denote these positions. The 700 Group is unique among the occupational groups in that the specialties within the subgroups have precise definitions.

2.1.4. The refinement of the 700 Group is intended to facilitate the recruitment of scientists and engineers. The NSCS title and specialty definition describes the specific nature of the work and defines the specific skills, knowledges, and qualification requirements for these positions. The qualification and rating requirements, constituting NASA's single agency qualification standards for AST positions, are found in the AST Rating Procedures.

## 2.2 NSCS Occupational Groups

The NSCS requires placing positions into occupational groupings as follows:

- a. 000 Group Reserved
- b. 100 Group Federal Wage System (FWS) (e.g., WG, WS, WL, XP, XS, XL, XD, and XN) jobs for which compensation is on the basis of prevailing locality wage rates.
- c. 200 Group Professional scientific and engineering positions performing work not directly related to NASA's aerospace and aeronautical research and development mission.
- d. 300 Group Technical or support positions engaged in nonprofessional technical and/or support work requiring primarily application of an intensive practical knowledge of the techniques and theories of a subject-matter area and/or the characteristics and capabilities, and operation of a variety of specialized equipment associated with that area.
- e. 400 Group Reserved
- f. 500 Group Clerical/assistant and related support positions engaged in work requiring application of established clerical or administrative systems, procedures, and techniques of a subject-matter area



or program.

g. 600 Group Professional administrative positions engaged in work requiring application of analytical ability, judgment, and knowledge of the principles, concepts, methodology, and objectives of a complex administrative or management subject-matter or program area.

h. 700 Group Professional engineering and scientific positions engaged in professional research, development, operations, and related work pertaining to the basic NASA mission.

i. 800 Group Reserved

j. 900 Group Life sciences positions engaged in scientific and/or health-oriented work not directly related to aerospace research and development, and requiring application of knowledges, skills, and techniques of health science, nursing, or biological science.

## 2.3 Revision and Addition of NASA Codes in NSCS Hundred Groups

2.3.1. Positions Classified to Groups Except the 700 Group. The specializations and their corresponding codes, in the occupational groups other than 700, are changed as needed. In the case of OPM-influenced changes, the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, will typically initiate the required action. A Center may initiate a change following the guidance contained in the NASA Desk guide on the NASA Supplemental Classification System.

2.3.2. Positions Classified to the 700 Group. The specialties and their corresponding codes in the 700 Group are changed as needed in response to emerging work or changing NASA programs and missions. The principal criteria for establishing a specialty are the existence of a significant amount of Agency work, normally representing at least 10 or more positions, and the expectation that the work will continue for a reasonable period. A Center may propose a change to the group following the guidance contained in the NASA Desk Guide on the NASA Supplemental Classification System.

## 2.4 NSCS Titles

2.4.1. NSCS titles are assigned to positions based on the NSCS classification code. The titles and codes are established and maintained by the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, or designee.

2.4.2. For positions classified to occupational groups of NSCS other than the 700 Group, the Civil Service classification is determined, and the tables and codes maintained by the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, will indicate the appropriate NSCS classification code.

2.4.3. For positions in the 700 Group, the titling process involves determining which NSCS specialty definition best describes the work of the position. This determination dictates the NSCS title, code number, Civil Service series, and title for the position. For example, a position meeting the definition of specialty number 709-22 would be titled AST-Physiologist.

2.4.4. When a position in the 700 Group is classified to a series for which the matching OPM series has no prescribed title (e.g., 745-07, AST-Mission Specialist Astronaut, 709-33, AST-Solar System Analysis) the NSCS title is also used as the OPM title.

2.4.5. For purposes other than official personnel records, NASA Centers may use organizational or functional titles in addition to the OPM and the NSCS titles.



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# Chapter 3. General Position Classification

## 3.1 Position Documentation

3.1.1. The prescribed position description format for positions covered by published Factor Evaluation System classification standards and narrative standards are specified in The Classifier's Handbook. The Factor Evaluation System format is the preferred format for all General Schedule (GS) positions.

3.1.2. All position descriptions, whether in narrative or Factor Evaluation System format, must include a statement by the supervisor attesting to the accuracy of the position description. This statement is usually included on the cover sheet of a position description.

3.1.3. The position description must include the major duties of the position in terms of the applicable factor pattern set forth in the governing classification standards for that particular occupation.

3.1.4. The duties and responsibilities constituting all NASA positions at GS-15 and below must be officially documented on a NASA Form 692, Position Description.

3.1.4.1. NASA Form 692, Position Description will also be used to document FLSA status, position sensitivity, competitive level codes, and files will contain documentation of the judgments made for position risk designations, position sensitivity, and other information pertinent to the position.

3.1.5. An adequate position description will provide a forthright presentation of the work assigned to the position and all the information needed to determine the pay plan, series, title, and grade of the position when the appropriate classification criteria are applied to the position.

3.1.6. Documentation of the judgments made, e.g., narrative evaluation statements, for the classification of certain categories of positions is required for the following:

3.1.6.1. Supervisory positions.

3.1.6.2. Positions that exceed the published grade-level criteria in the governing standard.

3.1.6.3. Positions for which there are no specific published grade-level criteria (e.g., GS-301, GS-341).

3.1.6.4. Positions whose classifications reflect in some measure the impact of the incumbent on the position.

3.1.6.5. Positions that are borderline GS/FWS.

## 3.2 Distribution of the Position Description

3.2.1. Hard or soft copies of position descriptions (NASA Form 692) are to be maintained by the

respective Center Human Resources Office and distributed as follows:

3.2.1.1. The signed original is retained by the respective Human Resources office.

3.2.1.2. A copy is provided for the employee.

3.2.1.3. A copy is provided for the supervisor of the position.

3.2.1.4. Additional copies may be provided for organizational files, series or occupational files, official personnel folders, and operating official's office files. All evaluation statements are filed with the original position descriptions in the respective Human Resources office. The evaluation statement need not be distributed to other points.

### **3.3 Classification Files**

3.3.1. The office responsible for classification should maintain the official files of original position descriptions. The file may also include charts of organizational segments presenting basic information.

### **3.4 Classification Appeals for General Schedule (GS) Positions**

3.4.1. An employee in a GS position may appeal initially to either the Center Human Resources Director; the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, NASA Headquarters; or bypass the NASA appeal levels and file an appeal directly with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

3.4.1.1. An employee may not file an appeal with the Agency and OPM at the same time.

3.4.1.2. An employee may file an appeal to OPM through the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division at which time the Agency has to act on the appeal within 60 days or forward to OPM.

3.4.1.3. In instances where the employee's appeal has been addressed to the Center Human Resources Director or the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, the addressee has the option of forwarding the appeal to the appropriate regional office of OPM without issuing a final decision. In such cases, the appeal must be forwarded to OPM within 30-calendar days of receipt, and the employee must be notified in writing of this intention and his or her concurrence obtained. If the employee does not concur, the appeal will be canceled.

3.4.2. A classification decision made by the Center Human Resources Director may be appealed to the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, or to the appropriate OPM Regional Office, or both sequentially. Also, a classification decision made by the Director Workforce Management and Development Division, may be appealed to the appropriate OPM Regional Office.

#### **3.4.3. Filing Instructions and Time Limits**

3.4.3.1. Employees are encouraged, but not required, to file all appeals through each lower level. By doing so, the opportunity is afforded for corrective action, if warranted. Also, the appeal process is expedited because the opportunity is provided for each level to include with the appeal additional information that is needed by the succeeding level. This includes such material as supplemental information clarifying the position's duties and responsibilities, the Center's and Agency's analysis of the position, and a copy of the official position description.

3.4.3.2. Within NASA, a written decision will be provided within 30-calendar days after all required information has been collected. When an appeal addressed to the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, is filed through the Center Human Resources Director, it must be forwarded by that official within 30-calendar days of date of receipt, unless acted upon favorably in the meantime.

3.4.3.3. When an appeal addressed to the OPM Regional Office is filed through Agency appeal levels (i.e., the Center Human Resources Director and/or the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division) it must be forwarded to the OPM Regional Office within 60-calendar days from date of initial receipt, unless one of the Agency levels acts favorably on it in the meantime.

#### 3.4.4. Protection of Retroactive Benefits

3.4.4.1. An appeal decision reversing a classification action that resulted in a downgrade or loss of compensation may be made retroactive, providing the initial classification appeal is filed with either one of the Agency levels or OPM no later than 15-calendar days after the effective date of the reclassification action. Also, any further appeal must be filed no later than 15-calendar days after the effective date of the reclassification action.

3.4.4.2. OPM may extend the time limits stated in paragraph 3.4.4.1 if an appellant can show that he or she was not notified of these limits and was not otherwise aware of them or that circumstances beyond his or her control prevented filing within these limits.

#### 3.4.5. Information Required When Appealing Within NASA

3.4.5.1. A classification appeal must be made in writing, signed by the appellant, and addressed to the level that the appellant selects.

3.4.5.2. An employee's appeal letter must include the following:

- a. Employee's mailing address and office telephone number.
- b. The position description number, title, pay plan, series, and grade of the position.
- c. The organizational unit and location of the employee's position.
- d. The title, pay plan, series, grade, or other classification action sought.
- e. Factual presentation of the reasons why appellant believes his or her position is improperly classified.
- f. A copy of the official position description.
- g. Name, address, and business telephone number of the employee's representative, if a representative has been designated.

#### 3.4.6. Effective Date of Appeal Decisions

3.4.6.1. A change brought about by an appeal decision (of either NASA appeal level or OPM) takes effect no earlier than the date of the appeal decision and no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period following the date of decision unless permission has been obtained from OPM for further delay. A classification action may not be effected retroactively.

3.4.6.2. Center Human Resources Directors must furnish the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, a copy of the SF-50 effecting any change resulting from a decision rendered by the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division.

3.4.6.3. Notifying Incumbents Concerning Appeal Rights. When a classification appeal decision is unfavorable to the employee, the employee must be advised concerning further rights of appeal within NASA and to OPM, including the right to appeal directly to OPM if desired. If such a decision would result in loss of grade or compensation, the decision must also inform the employee of the necessity to file any subsequent classification appeal with OPM, no later than 15-calendar days after the effective date of the reclassification in order to protect retroactive pay benefits that he or she might be entitled to in connection with the appeal. The time limit for filing a subsequent appeal with the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, may be extended if the employee is able to demonstrate that he or she was not notified of these time limits or that there were extenuating circumstances.

3.4.6.4. Reporting OPM Appeal Decisions. Center Human Resources Directors should furnish the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, an information copy of appeal decisions rendered by regional offices of OPM.

## **3.5 Job-Grading Appeals of FWS Jobs**

3.5.1. An employee in an FWS position may appeal initially to either the Center Human Resources Director or to the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, NASA Headquarters. An employee in an FWS job may not file an appeal directly to OPM without first going through the NASA appeal process. If the employee is not satisfied with the NASA decision, he or she may appeal to OPM.

### **3.5.2. Filing Instructions and Time Limits**

3.5.2.1. Employees are encouraged, but not required, to file applications for review of their jobs through the Center Human Resources Director. This provides an opportunity for resolution or corrective action, if warranted. Also, the job-grading review process is expedited because the opportunity is provided for each level to include with the application additional information which is needed by the next level; e.g., official position description, the Center's analysis of the position.

3.5.2.2. Within NASA, a written decision on an application filed with the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, should be provided within 60-calendar days of the date the employee files an application for review. If a decision has not been issued within the 60-day timeframe, the employee may request the Assistant Administrator for Human Capital Management to make the final decision on the job.

3.5.2.3. If an employee elects to file an appeal with OPM after NASA has issued its final decision, the appeal must be filed within 15-calendar days of the date of receipt of the NASA decision; and the employee must specify that part of the NASA decision with which he or she disagrees.

### **3.5.3. Protection of Retroactive Benefits**

3.5.3.1. A NASA review decision that reverses a job-grading decision that resulted in loss in grade or pay may be made retroactive to the effective date of the action being reviewed for the change, provided the employee's application was filed within 15-calendar days of the effective date of the change to lower grade. However, when the NASA decision raises the grade of the job above its grade immediately preceding the downgrading, retroactivity applies only to the extent of restoration to the grade immediately preceding the downgrading.

3.5.3.2. OPM may extend the time limit for filing an appeal if circumstances beyond the employee's control prevented him or her from filing it within 15-calendar days, or the employee was not notified or was not otherwise aware of the time limit for filing an appeal.



#### 3.5.4. Information Required When Applying for a Job-Grading Review Within NASA

3.5.4.1. An application for review must be in writing, signed by the requester, and addressed to the level that the requester selects.

3.5.4.2. An employee's letter of application for review must include the following:

- a. Employee's name, mailing address, and office telephone number.
- b. The number, title, pay plan, series, and grade of the job.
- c. Organizational unit and location of the employee's job.
- d. The title, series, and grade or other job grading action sought.
- e. Factual presentation of the reasons why the employee believes his or her job is erroneously graded.
- f. A copy of the official job description.
- g. Name, address, and business telephone number of the employee's representative, if a representative has been designated.

3.5.4.3. In instances where the employee has filed the application for review through the Center Human Resources Director, the Center Human Resources Director is encouraged to attempt resolution at that level before forwarding it to the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, for a final decision. The employee may file with OPM only after NASA has rendered its decision on the application.

#### 3.5.5. Effective Date of NASA Decisions

3.5.5.1. When the final NASA decision on an application for review will result in a change, the decision takes effect no earlier than the date of the decision and no later than the beginning of the first pay period, which begins after the 60th day from the date the application was filed.

3.5.5.2. Center Human Resources Directors must furnish the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, a copy of the SF-50 effecting any change resulting from a decision rendered by the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division.

3.5.6. Notifying Incumbents Concerning Appeal Rights. When a decision by the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, on an appeal will lead to loss of grade or pay for the employee, the employee must be promptly notified of the decision and of his or her rights to appeal to OPM. The notice must inform the employee of the need to file further appeal within 15-calendar days of the effective date of the change in order to establish or preserve his or her rights to adjustment.

3.5.7. Reporting OPM Appeal Decisions. Center Human Resources Directors will ensure the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, has an information copy of appeal decisions.

### 3.6 Implementation and Review of Classification Standards

3.6.1. New or updated classification standards and/or classification guides must be applied to covered positions within 12 months of the date of issuance from OPM.

3.6.2. Periodically, OPM will issue draft standards and request comments from Agencies having

covered positions. The Director, Workforce Management and Development Division will initially review these draft standards and request comments from the Centers having covered positions. For draft standards where NASA is a lead agency, the Centers having covered positions will be required to test apply and comment on the draft standards, as requested by the Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, who will coordinate the Agency response.